

Well, thank you all for coming and today is going to be a great day. As you know, we always have people from every walk of life – distinguished guests come here. But this afternoon I think is special. We have somebody who has dedicated his entire life to serving our country.

As the highest ranking officer in our armed forces as well as the president's principal military advisor, our speaker is one of the country's top leaders during a time when we are engaged in two wars and a global struggle against terrorism. Suffice to say, he has unique insight into the nature of leadership during these challenging times.

After graduating from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1968 as an ensign, our speaker served aboard a destroyer during the Vietnam War. While rising through the ranks during his naval career, he served as commanding officer on three ships. As an admiral, he commanded the USS George Washington Carrier Group and the U.S. 2nd Fleet. When he wasn't serving aboard a ship, he focused his efforts on resourcing and personnel, working with the Navy staff, the bureau of personnel and the staff of the secretary of defense.

An accomplished scholar, our speaker holds a Master of Science degree in operations research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California and also graduated from the advanced management program at the Harvard Business School.

Since becoming chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in 2007, he's focused on three main priorities: defending our nation's interest in the Middle East, revitalizing and reconstituting our armed forces and properly balancing global risks.

And while his contributions to our nation's military stance and strategy have been very significant, he's also made an impact in the lives of the men and women in uniform by supporting a range of initiatives that assists soldiers and their families.

So drawing upon his broad range of experiences and from his long service to our country, he's going to discuss world events, national security, the state of the military and, importantly, community support for our veterans. So please join me in giving a very warm welcome to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen.